

Testing your Child for Lead

What to expect at the doctor's visit

Lead Tipsheet #1



A blood lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead in them.

Toddlers at ages 1 and 2 are more likely to be exposed to lead. They can get lead dust or chips into their bodies because they often put their hands, toys or other things in their mouths. They also play where lead dust may be - like floors and near window sills.

Lead was used in paint. Paint bought today does not have lead in it. Older houses often still have old lead paint in them. Dust from old paint is the most common way children get lead poisoning.

Talk with your doctor about a blood lead test for your child.

The doctor should ask questions about the age of houses where your child spends more than 10 hours per week, whether any of these houses have been recently renovated and whether you or someone who spends time with your child works with lead.

- 1 and 2 year olds should have a blood lead test. MaineCare requires it. Parents can ask their doctor to test their children for lead.
- Children 3 to 6 years old may also need a blood lead test. Test your child if you have moved to an older building, your child has never been tested, or if there has been recent repairs to your home.

If your child often swallows things that aren't food, or chews on window sills, talk to your doctor about getting a blood lead test.



Venous (Arm) Test

How is a blood lead test done?

A child's blood test can be either a finger or toe prick (capillary test) or by drawing blood from a vein (venous test).

Some blood lead tests are done right in the doctor's office. Other doctors may give you a lab slip to have the blood test done at a lab. Bring this paper to the lab when your child goes for the lead test.

Ask your doctor for the results. If the blood lead test is high, there are things you can do to help your child. Call the Lead Program to find out how: 866-292-3474.

If you have more questions, if your child needs a test, or if you need help understanding what the results mean, you can reach the Lead Program at:

- 866-292-3474
- www.maine.gov/healthyhomes



Capillary (Finger) Test

Protect your family.

- Check this website: www.maine.gov/healthyhomes
- Call for advice: 1-866-292-3474 • TTY: 800-606-0215



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention
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